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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/3/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [KICC](#) [ASEC](#) [LT](#)  
SUBJECT: UPDATE: FOREIGN MINISTER'S SITUATION; BILATERAL MATTERS

REF: (A) MASERU 0059 (B) MASERU 0051

CLASSIFIED BY: JUNE CARTER PERRY, AMBASSADOR, EXEC, STATE.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

#### Article 98

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11. (C) Following February 2 Cabinet meeting, Finance Minister Thahane contacted Ambassador to report on his conversation with injured FOMIN Moleleki on pending bilateral matters. Thahane said that Moleleki confirmed, despite his confinement from the shooting incident, that he is working on language for an Article 98 Agreement. According to the Finance Minister, Moleleki has instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Acting Principal Secretary to work closely with the Office of the GOL Attorney

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General to develop the text. FOMIN Moleleki then called Ambassador February 3 to say a draft is ready and we should expect to meet with the A/Attorney General soon. (Note: As previously reported, we have provided a number of sample texts to the FOMIN; these have been forwarded to the Attorney General for review and for compilation of a mutually agreeable text.)

#### Millennium Challenge Account

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12. (C) During a February 2 budget briefing of the Cabinet, the Minister of Finance (in that context) discussed Lesotho's progress in preparing a Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) proposal. One of the attendees asked Thahane if the length of time the proposal was taking was somehow linked with Lesotho's not having signed an Article 98 Agreement. In his response, Thahane "suggested" that the MCA process was a separate one and he did not see a link between the two.

#### GOL Silence on Attack

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13. (C) The Government has remained silent on the attack and the condition of the FOMIN. We spoke late February 1 with the Government Secretary who gave us a somewhat mixed response when queried about the condition of the FOMIN. He stated that the FOMIN was recovering well, but at the same time he was not able to participate in regular meetings. The Finance Minister expected that the FOMIN could be able to do more work in his office the week of February 6. Since there have been no public GOL statements, despite our and other governments' understanding that the Deputy Prime Minister would indeed be issuing a statement, the Media Institute of Southern Africa has reportedly tried to reach Lesotho's Government Secretary to ask why a statement has not been forthcoming nearly a week after the fact.

Comment

14. (C) The prolonged official silence has led to further speculation that there was political motivation behind the attack. There have been contradictory reports concerning Moleleki's contesting Prime Minister Mosisili for the lead LCD party position. Our understanding, based on a conversation with Moleleki after the first Party Congress in December, was that he and the Prime Minister had come to an agreement. We and others have taken this to mean that Moleleki would not seek the top leadership position, but would take a unity position with Mosisili, thus securing a probable leadership position in the future. The more vocal and public contender for the top job was Communications Minister Thabane, who received little support during the second Party Congress. None of this answers who might have shot the FOMIN. The weapons used, either Uzis or AK47s, would normally have resulted in death. However, all of the reports we have indicate that only Moleleki's arm was injured; according to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Commander of the Lesotho Defense Force, the Minister sustained bullet wounds to his arm. The bullets, according to the Commander, were removed. (Note: The Foreign Minister sounded strong during our conversation, but was only briefly in his office February 3.) Whether the attack was simply a warning to Moleleki, either by discontented elements within the party or an act of personal vengeance, remains to be seen. There has been no visible public unrest since the attack; only one local newspaper carried a full blown cover story on the assault. End Comment.

PERRY